

What we claim as our invention is:

1. A thin-walled, plastic container having a body portion, said body portion having generally rectangular sidewalls and a base wherein said body portion comprises a label mounting area, on at least two of the adjacent rectangular sidewalls, extending between an upper label bumper and a lower label bumper, said label mounting area comprising:
  - 5 a substantially generally rectangular vacuum panel having an upper and lower edge on one sidewall, and
  - a plurality of ribs positioned in the label area on the sidewall adjacent to the side wall containing the vacuum panel, said ribs having either an outward or inwardly facing rounded edges, relative to the interior of the container, wherein said ribs are parallel to each other.
2. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.
3. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has a width that is less than the width of the adjacent sidewall containing ribs in the label area.
4. The plastic container of claim 3, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.
5. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has one or a plurality of ribs above or below the vacuum panel.
6. The plastic container of claim 5, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.
7. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the ribs and vacuum panels cooperate to maintain container shape upon filling and cooling of the container.
8. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the container is made of PET.
9. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the container is hot-fillable.
10. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the base is non-rounded.

11. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has one rib above the vacuum panel.

12. The plastic container of claim 11, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.

13. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has one rib below the vacuum panel.

14. The plastic container of claim 13, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.

15. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has a plurality of ribs above the vacuum panel.

16. The plastic container of claim 15, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.

17. The plastic container of claim 1, wherein the sidewall containing the vacuum panel has a plurality of ribs below the vacuum panel.

18. The plastic container of claim 17, wherein the adjacent sidewall is symmetrical to an opposing side wall relative to rib and vacuum panel placement, size and number.